

RUSSIA AND THE WEST IN IRAN

by dumping on her markets Russian manufactured goods to the detriment of both foreign competitors and the native industry; that, profiting by the fact that she was the only important market for the northern provinces, Russia did not hesitate to take advantage by compelling Iran to conclude trade agreements often prejudicial to the latter's interests; and that Russia's predominant position in Iran's foreign trade waned only when she met with the more determined centralized system of Germany and with the energetic action of Reza Khan to put order into the affairs of Iran. The introduction of a foreign trade monopoly has already been noted. Another action of epochal significance was the construction, by 1938, of the Transiranian Railway, which finally linked economically the long-separated northern and southern parts of the Iranian Empire. The Transiranian, whose completion was due to the stubborn resolve of Reza Shah and whose financing was based on a special tax on tea and sugar, without foreign help, was an outstanding achievement of Iranian nationalism. But contrary to the early hopes of Soviet rulers, this oriental nationalism was opposed as much to Soviet ambitions as to Western imperialism.

That much can be said about external Iranian-Soviet relations. With regard to internal matters, Moscow would never forget, as is attested by the above-quoted writings, that Reza's regime was only a transitional period, which had, according to the Marxist view, to lead to the final stage of historical development, Socialism, and eventually Communism. The official school of thought having re-jected the immediate priority of the agrarian

revolution, it followed that, by contrast, Moscow would favor the concentration of efforts upon the industrial workers and the radical intelligentsia. In practice that meant agitation and organizational work among these two classes. Following Lenin's precept that any ruse was good to achieve the ends of the proletarian revolution, there should be both overt and covert activity to promote Communism in Iran. Four instruments should be utilized for that purpose: the official Soviet diplomatic representatives, the Communist party of Iran, the G.P.U., and the Comintern. The initial activities of such Soviet envoys as Rothstein and Shumiatsky have already been reviewed briefly. During the